

Media Release

Date: 30 July 2019

Policy & Resources statement re. the appointment of the Head of Curriculum and Standards

The Policy & Resources Committee does not, as a matter of policy, normally comment on employment issues relating to individuals. However, the Committee has decided to make an exception in this case, given the significant media coverage and the understandable questions it has prompted from the public and States' members.

Soon after the process of appointing the new Head of Curriculum and Standards at Education, Sport & Culture had concluded, the President of the Policy & Resources Committee, having not been involved in or aware of the detail of the process, had concerns about the governance and decision-making in relation to both the identification of the role and the process for filling it. The full Committee then asked the Chief Executive to begin an internal, fact-finding exercise. The Chief Executive asked an experienced senior officer, who had not been involved in the appointment, to carry out that exercise. However, it was suspended when it became apparent that an Employment Tribunal was likely to get underway.

The Tribunal is no longer expected to go ahead, and therefore the fact-finding process will resume. While various accounts of 'what happened' are being discussed and reported in the media, the Policy & Resources Committee believes this is, in the first instance, the appropriate and proportionate next step. Once the facts are established, if further steps or inquiries are required, these can be determined at that stage.

The Policy & Resources Committee is conscious of the parallels being drawn between this matter and other ongoing political discussions to do with 'governance'. As has already been stated publically, the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture will soon undergo an independent governance review, similar to those carried out with the Committees *for* Health & Social Care and Home Affairs and as is currently underway for the Policy & Resources Committee. It is only after such a review that a judgement can be made as to how well governance principles have been observed by a particular committee. The Policy & Resources Committee is determined to see the recommendations that come from all of these governance reviews implemented.

Similarly, it is now well-recognised that there is at times a lack of clarity in the precise roles of civil servants and politicians, and where the boundaries lie. This was at the heart of a debate in the States of Deliberation last month. It is partly for this reason the States has also recently directed that a review be undertaken of the rules defining the relationship between civil servants and Deputies.

Finally, whatever the outcome of the fact-finding exercise and any steps that may follow as a result, the Policy & Resources Committee is concerned that focus should be maintained on one of the government's most important priorities, the transformation of secondary education. Parents, students and the wider community are looking to the States to deliver on their promises and to give real certainty as to the future of the education system. The States must ensure this major transformation programme moves forward and local children are not left with an unclear future.

Ends

Notes to Media

The Policy & Resources Committee will not be providing interviews on this matter, at this stage.

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